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at 7 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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ORGANIZATION OF [illegible]

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4.

The meeting was called to order at 7.50 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its organizational and substantive sessions of 1993 (A/48/7/Add.4; A/C.5/48/19 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his report, the bulk of resources required to implement the mandates of the Economic and Social Council had already been included in the budget for 1994-1995 and that requirements for 1993 were covered by approved resources for the budget for 1992-1993.

2. An additional amount would, however, be required for 1994, amounting to approximately $2.4 million. Following discussions between the Advisory Committee and representatives of the Secretary-General and for reasons outlined in its report, ACABQ was recommending an amount of $1,013,500, to be considered by the General Assembly in the context of the use and operation of the contingency fund.

3. The procedure for dealing with the Economic and Social Council revised estimates differed from that followed by the Committee in handling programme budget implications of resolutions adopted by Main Committees of the General Assembly. With regard to the former, the Committee was requested to take note of the estimates, recommended by the Advisory Committee, of $1,013,500, on the understanding that such appropriations as might be necessary would be requested by the Secretary-General in the consolidated statement of programme budget implications which would be submitted shortly to the General Assembly.

4. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) sought clarification of the observations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 4 of its report, relating to implementation of Economic and Social Council decision 1993/254. It appeared from the table in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report, and the more detailed breakdown in paragraph 14 of that report, that requirements would total $2,592,300 and that there would therefore be an excess of $592,300 which was not covered. ACABQ had recommended an amount of $550,000 for the first six months of the biennium, to finance Economic and Social Council decision 1993/254. As indicated by the Chairman of ACABQ in explanation of the procedures to be followed for Economic and Social Council revised estimates, that amount of $550,000 would be provided in the framework of the contingency fund. The question arose, therefore, as to what would become of the $2 million referred to in the table in paragraph 6 of A/C.5/48/19. Did the ACABQ proposal mean that it would, provisionally, not be allocated or, as seemed more likely, that it would come under the proposed programme budget? He asked whether the Controller or the Chairman of ACABQ could illuminate the matter.

5. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium) also sought clarification with regard to the travel expenses of the inter-sessional ad hoc open-ended working group established by the Commission on Sustainable Development. He wondered what the status of that working group would be and what entitlement it would have to travel expenses, pointing out that many other similar working groups might claim such entitlements.

6. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said, in response to the question put by the representative of the Netherlands, that, if the Committee were to approve the ACABQ recommendation, revised estimates would have to be submitted to ACABQ and the same, or a revised, amount would be requested, depending on subsequent developments.

7. In response to the question raised by the representative of Belgium, he said that, under the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, subsidiary bodies could create inter-sessional committees when necessary. That eventuality did not often arise, but when it did, the same procedure was followed as in the case under consideration. He drew attention to rule 21 of the rules of procedure.

8. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the amount of $500,000 had been authorized by ACABQ only for six months, pending receipt from the Secretary-General of the information requested by the Advisory Committee in its report. That information would include the results of negotiations and agreements between the United Nations and the Government of Cambodia concerning a United Nations human rights presence in that country, pursuant to the request in the relevant decision of the Economic and Social Council.

9. The Advisory Committee had also requested information on other programmes and agencies working in Cambodia and on the coordination necessary between the Field Office in Cambodia and other United Nations agencies. The relevant information, which had been requested in a letter to the Secretary-General when ACABQ had provided its initial commitment, had still not been provided. For that reason, ACABQ had decided, for the time being, to provide an amount of $500,000 and to resume its consideration of the $2 million at its session in the spring of 1994.

10. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Fifth Committee should take note of the additional requirements resulting from the resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council in 1993, estimated at $1,013,500 under sections 8, 9 and 21 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, on the understanding that such additional appropriations as might be needed would be subject to the guidelines for the use and operation of the contingency fund adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/211. The Fifth Committee further recommended that the General Assembly should approve travel expenses of representatives of least developed countries attending the regional preparatory meetings for the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the Congress itself, in accordance with the request in Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/32.

11. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that the proposal was, in general terms, acceptable but that, in accordance with the observations of ACABQ in paragraph 9 of its report, the second part of the proposed decision should be qualified as an exception.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the second part of the proposed decision would be amended accordingly, with the addition of the words "on an exceptional basis" after the words "the General Assembly approves". He took it that the proposal, as amended, was acceptable to the Committee.

13. It was so decided.

Financing of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (continued) (A/48/7/Add.3; A/C.5/48/27)

14. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the proposals by the Secretary-General were based on the assumption that normal operations could resume in Haiti in early 1994. The Advisory Committee went along with the proposal of the Secretary-General; the recommended amount of $4 million had been reached using a variation of the Secretary-General's costing assumptions.

15. He noted that there were a number of vacancies in the Mission and that payment of daily subsistence allowance and per diem had changed in view of the Mission's deployment. In the light of those circumstances and information it had received, the Advisory Committee was recommending the amount of $4 million. As reflected in the reports by the Secretary-General and ACABQ, there was an understanding between the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations to the effect that the United Nations would bear the cost of local staff employed both by it and OAS and, in exchange, OAS would be responsible for the Mission's accommodation, utilities and commercial communications costs. As a result, the number of locally recruited staff was now set at 254. ACABQ therefore recommended that the Fifth Committee should approve an additional amount of $4 million under the regular budget for 1994-1995 and that the approval would not be dealt with in accordance with procedures for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

16. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/48/27) and endorse the recommendations of ACABQ; that it should approve the estimate of $4 million for the International Civilian Mission to Haiti for the period 1 January to 31 March 1994; and that it should authorize the Secretary-General, should the Mission continue beyond 31 March 1994, to seek the concurrence of ACABQ to enter into related commitments under the terms of General Assembly resolutions to be adopted on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1994-1995.

17. It was so decided.

Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (A/C.5/48/41)

18. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had reviewed the estimates contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/48/41), and had noted that they were based on expenditure in the operational area. It recommended an amount of $1 million for the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP) and made no change to the number of posts requested by the Secretary-General.

19. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, based on the report of the Secretary-General and on the recommendations of ACABQ, the Fifth Committee should recommend that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/48/27) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee; that it note that the estimated costs of OSGAP for the biennium 1992-1993 would be $6,985,800 against an appropriation of $7,764,300 and that the decreased requirement of $778,500 would be reflected in the second performance report under section 2 of the programme budget for 1992-1993; that it approve an appropriation of $1 million required under section 4 of the proposed programme budget for 1994-1995, to cover the costs of OSGAP in 1994; and that it also approve an appropriation of $135,400 under section 28 (Staff assessment) of the proposed programme budget for 1994-1995, offset by the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

20. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 130: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (A/48/769; A/C.5/48/40)

(b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (A/48/770; A/C.5/48/40)

AGENDA ITEM 131: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (A/48/771; A/C.5/48/40)

AGENDA ITEM 132: FINANCING OF THE ACTIVITIES ARISING FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991)

(a) UNITED NATIONS IRAQ-KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION (A/48/772; A/C.5/48/70)

AGENDA ITEM 133: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (A/48/773; A/C.5/48/40)

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AGENDA ITEM 149: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN MOZAMBIQUE (A/48/779; A/C.5/48/40)

AGENDA ITEM 160: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS (A/48/780; A/C.5/48/40)

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AGENDA ITEM 174: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MILITARY LIAISON TEAM IN CAMBODIA (A/48/786; A/C.5/48/40)

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (A/48/778)

(a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

(b) RELOCATION OF BELARUS AND UKRAINE TO THE GROUP OF MEMBER STATES SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 3 (c) OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 43/232

21. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) referred to statements he had made in the Committee at a previous meeting to the effect that the Committee should agree to consider only those proposals under agenda items 130 to 174 for which previous authorizations to apportion and assess contributions had been given and that consideration of all other proposals should be deferred to January or February 1994. He therefore suggested that the items should not be taken up one by one at the current stage but that the Committee should first decide on which items to consider now and which to defer until the relevant reports had been received from the Secretariat. His delegation was prepared to enter into informal consultations to discuss the matter.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that, while certain delegations had requested informal consultations on the 17 peace-keeping operations before the Committee met to reach a decision - and he had intended to propose such consultations - he had thought it might still be useful to introduce the items and to hear the reports by ACABQ. However, he proposed a brief suspension of the meeting in order to discuss the considerations mentioned by the representative of the Netherlands.

The meeting was suspended at 8.30 p.m. and resumed at 8.40 p.m.

23. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 138 (a), said he regretted that the report had been submitted late and that it had made use of a consolidated format covering all 17 peace-keeping operations. The Secretariat had been forced to adopt that format owing to the late arrival of information from the field.

24. An informal paper has been circulated providing information on the mandates, financial status and the status of documentation for the various operations. The three categories of missions discussed in the paper included: existing missions having authorization from the General Assembly subject to Advisory Committee concurrence, namely, the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) and the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ); existing operations without General Assembly financing authorization including, to date, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), and the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP); and new operations, such as the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR), the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the United Nations Military Liaison Team in Cambodia. In his report, the Secretary-General had requested General Assembly authorization for some of the missions in the first category (UNIKOM, for example) until the end of 1993 or very early 1994. Authorization for missions in the second category would extend through early 1994 and new operations would require new authorization.

25. The Secretary-General wished to maintain the size of existing operations, with the exception of those operations (for example, UNIKOM, ONUSAL, UNPROFOR and ONUMOZ) for which the Security Council had already authorized enlargement. The Secretariat had anticipated the additional requirements involved and had requested authorization through 30 April 1993 subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

26. As to when documentation on UNTAC and UNPROFOR would become available, he said that the relevant reports were being processed. Reports on UNIKOM, ONUSAL and UNOSOM II would be submitted in early February 1994. The likely availability of documents relating to operations in the second and third categories had also been indicated in the informal paper.

27. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the report of the Advisory Committee in document A/48/778 should be read in conjunction with the subsections of the Secretary-General's report relating to individual operations. The ACABQ report had outlined the conditions under which the Advisory Committee had arrived at its recommendations and described, in general terms, the reasons for those recommendations.

28. The Advisory Committee had recommended commitment authority in some cases, and, in several other cases, it had also recommended assessments. The period for which commitment authority would be granted was variable: in the majority of cases, commitment authority would end on 31 March 1994 instead of 30 April, as the Secretary-General had recommended. The factors influencing the amounts recommended included the shortening of the commitment period and the cash situation of the operation, which had affected the level of assessment. For example, in the case of UNDOF, the amount requested on 13 December 1993 had been approximately $30 million. In that case, the Advisory Committee had not recommended assessment of that amount; instead, it had recommended a commitment of that amount. In other cases, the Advisory Committee had recommended assessments below the requested commitment authority. Lastly, in the case of operations in which the requests for civilian sector support had been high, the Advisory Committee had recommended lesser amounts for commitment.

29. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) said that his delegation had previously expressed its reservations regarding the submission of a consolidated budget for all peace-keeping operations. In addition, he noted that the non-recurrent expenditures listed in the documents submitted by the Secretariat did not add up. Moreover, too little time had been given to the Committee to consider the financing of the peace-keeping operations by comparison with the time available for consideration of the proposed programme budget. In that context, the comments of ACABQ in its report (A/48/778) were very pertinent and deserved the full support of the Committee.

30. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said his delegation would like to receive a breakdown of amounts included for external audit in the budgets of each of the operations. The documents submitted by the Secretariat contained no information in that regard.

31. His delegation was not prepared to take action on any of the proposals, since it had not had sufficient time to study the documents; indeed, it could take several months to examine the documents properly. However, his delegation would endeavour to be flexible.

32. The United States had serious concerns regarding the process by which peace-keeping operations were being funded in 1993. He believed that process was a travesty that, in the end, undermined the general credibility of the Organization.

33. Mr. NDOBOLI (Uganda) said that reference had been made in paragraph 114 of the Secretary-General's report to the "integration" of UNOMUR within UNAMIR. In that connection, he requested assurances from the Secretariat that the intended integration was purely administrative and did not relate to the mandates of UNOMUR.

34. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said he agreed with the observations of the Advisory Committee in document A/48/778, especially paragraphs 2 and 3. Canada could not accept the view that the General Assembly was in any way responsible for the late submission of the budgets, as paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of document A/C.5/48/40 seemed to imply.

35. Canada had made provision to pay its peace-keeping assessment on the basis of estimates from the Secretariat of Canada's approximate share for the months of January, February and March 1994. It was true that the amount in the original request exceeded those estimates. For that reason, he welcomed the proposals of the Advisory Committee to reduce those amounts to more manageable levels. Given the reductions, Canada should be able to pay its assessment on time and in full within the prescribed 30-day period. However, because a request had been made for commitment authority and not an appropriation proper, Canada did not have all the information that it would normally need to compute the amount of its assessment. In order for delegations to have a better idea of what their assessments would be, the Secretariat should provide additional information concerning the cash balances and unliquidated obligations outstanding for each mission, as well as an estimate, based on prior experience, of what those outstanding obligations would be at the end of the commitment period. In addition, the Committee would need information on unencumbered balances, even where shortages were due to Member States' failure to meet obligations. Furthermore, the Committee would need information on cash requirements for the support account in the three-month period which would be in excess of the current account balance. If it wished, the Secretariat could provide that information in informal consultations.

36. Mr. RAMOS (Spain) supported the comments of other delegations regarding the late submission and format of the Secretary-General's report. Moreover, corrections needed to be made in the Spanish text of paragraph 2 of the Advisory Committee's report in document A/48/778 in order to bring it into line with the English version. His delegation endorsed the comments made regarding the lack of information on the assessments on Member States; furthermore, it wished to know the precise assessment figures recommended by the Advisory Committee.

37. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said his delegation concurred in the Advisory Committee's comments in paragraphs 2, 3 and 8 of its report. In addition, it agreed with the point made by Canada that the General Assembly could not be held responsible for delays in issuing reports.

38. In view of the short time available to the Committee for consideration of the reports, his delegation was not prepared to take a decision on the financing of the peace-keeping operations. It needed additional time to consult with its Government.

39. Mr. BOIN (France) supported the remarks made by the Netherlands, the United States and Canada to the effect that the late submission of documentation was intolerable. It was unacceptable for the Committee to be put in the position of having to take decisions, in just a few hours, on proposals involving more than $1 billion. Moreover, the greater the Secretary-General's professed resolve to rationalize procedures for the submission of financial information, the worse the situation seemed to become. Circulating a lengthy document on 17 operations only days before the Committee was required to take a decision on them represented a lump-sum approach that simply did not work. The process of budgeting for peace-keeping operations required more transparency. France would be prepared to discuss questions relating to budget procedures in informal consultations, if the Secretariat wished to explain the reasons for the delays in greater detail.

40. Mr. AL-RASHIDI (Kuwait) said that his Government had decided, in view of the crucial role played by peace-keeping operations, to provide two thirds of the financing for UNIKOM.

41. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that his delegation concurred in the comments of ACABQ in document A/48/778, especially paragraphs 2, 4 and 5. The procedures followed by the Secretariat in submitting its proposals for approval were improper; any action that the General Assembly would take should not, therefore, serve as a precedent. However, since an urgent response was required in the case of many of the operations, Nigeria was prepared to work with all delegations in order to achieve consensus on the decisions in question.

42. Ms. SAEKI (Japan) said that Japan shared the serious concerns expressed by the Advisory Committee, especially in paragraphs 2 to 8 of its report.

43. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), responding to the question asked by the representative of Spain regarding financing for UNTAC, said that ACABQ had recommended commitment authority of up to $100 million for the period from 1 September to 31 December 1993. However, because of several recent developments, liquidation of UNTAC had been postponed until 30 April; as a result, the Secretary-General had requested an additional $34 million. The Advisory Committee had recommended maintaining the original authority of the General Assembly to appropriate $100 million and to assess that amount on Member States.

44. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), replying to the question put by the representative of Uganda, said that the integration of UNOMUR and UNAMIR did not in any way imply changes in the mandates of the two missions. With respect to the question raised by a number of delegations as to the reasons for delays in issuing documents, he said that the staff of the Secretariat units responsible for the financing of peace-keeping operations were among the most diligent in the Organization. However, they were forced to rely on information from the field that was constantly changing. For example, in preparing the report on UNPROFOR, the Secretariat had completed its draft in mid-October; however, it had been forced to revise the document twice in response to changes in the situation.

45. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said he realized that it would not be possible for his delegation to receive immediately the information it had requested; therefore, he formally requested the Secretariat to submit, in writing, information on resources allocated for audits in the budgets of each of the peace-keeping missions.

46. He recognized the difficulties faced by the Secretariat in preparing budgets for missions such as UNPROFOR, in respect of which circumstances were constantly changing. However, that explanation did not apply to budgets for operations which had been in existence for several years; therefore, he found it hard to understand why the Committee had not been issued reports on the financing of those missions.

47. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) requested the Controller to submit, in writing, answers to the questions asked by Canada.

48. Mr. BOIN (France) said that his delegation was not at all satisfied with the Controller's explanations. Of the 17 operations discussed in the Secretary-General's report, 8 were long-standing operations that were more or less inactive. The Controller had provided no explanation for the late submission of documents on those operations. Moreover, his Government would have serious difficulties in dealing with a lump-sum request of the kind contained in the Secretary-General's report.

49. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) expressed support for the Advisory Committee's report, especially paragraphs 3, 4 and 8. It very much regretted that the Advisory Committee had been unable to grant commitment authority despite the Fifth Committee's effort to allow the Secretariat extra time. His delegation was perhaps more favourable than others to a lump-sum approach but, like others, felt that there would be great difficulty obtaining the required level of funding for peace-keeping operations from Governments without proper justification.

50. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation would need more time to study the meagre information that had been made available to the Committee and would not be in a position to agree to any appropriations for peace-keeping at the meeting the next day. The United States Government supported all peace-keeping operations, but the current federal budget did not include sufficient funds for them and his delegation must be able to assure its Congress that scrutiny by the Fifth Committee of the funding requested had been meaningful. It would be very detrimental if the Committee tried to ram through a decision.

51. The CHAIRMAN said that, obviously, in view of the constraints faced by the peace-keeping operations, some of which required General Assembly action to be able to operate beyond 1 January 1994, the Committee would have to come up with some kind of decision. He took it that the Committee agreed in the meantime to have the representative of Japan, Mr. Inomata, conduct informal consultations with all interested delegations.

52. It was so decided.

53. The CHAIRMAN, referring to agenda item 138 (b) as it related to the apportionment of peace-keeping expenses, said that he had been informed by the Coordinator of the informal consultations that agreement on the matter had been reached but that for logistical reasons the necessary documentation could not be issued until the following morning. He took it that the Committee wished to waive the 24-hour rule so that the matter could be discussed at the next day's meeting.

54. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 121: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

High-level posts (A/48/7/Add.2; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

55. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on high-level posts (A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1) and on the related financial implications (A/C.5/48/9/Add.1). Referring to paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 9 of the former, he noted that the Secretary-General's proposals formed an integral part of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1993-1994. Despite a dramatic increase in United Nations activities, the Secretary-General was not proposing an increase in posts, and the location of most posts remained unchanged. Drawing attention in particular to paragraphs 12 to 14, 17, 19 to 21, 23 and 25, he reviewed the proposed structural changes in the areas of administration and management, inspections and investigations, political affairs, peace-keeping and human settlements.

56. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee's extensive discussion of the proposals in the Secretary-General's report was reflected in its report (A/48/7/Add.2).

57. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposals to provide two additional posts at the assistant secretary-general level for the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, but that in the case of the latter Department, for reasons relating to the restructuring, the second post of Assistant Secretary-General should for the time being be accommodated by downgrading the Under-Secretary-General post. With regard to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), it was the view of the Advisory Committee that institutional arrangements in Nairobi were a policy matter requiring an intergovernmental decision. ACABQ was also asking the Secretary-General to reconsider the issues related to the Department of Administration and Management in the light of the considerations outlined in paragraph 6 of its report. It furthermore questioned the advisability of removing secretariat services for the General Assembly and the Security Council from the Department of Political Affairs; recalling that the secretariat services for the Economic and Social Council had remained in the substantive department concerned, the Advisory Committee recommended that the

(Mr. Msalle)

Secretary-General should be requested to explain further the reasons for the proposed change. The Advisory Committee agreed with the proposal regarding the post of Assistant Secretary-General for the protocol function, recalling an earlier ACABQ recommendation in connection with the proposed programme budget for the 1986-1987 biennium, which the Fifth Committee had not accepted.

58. ACABQ expected that the Committee would take the comments in its report into account when considering the Secretary-General's proposals.

59. Mr. BOIN (France) said that his Government supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in its report, especially in paragraphs 5 to 7. Regarding the Department of Administration and Management, his delegation shared the Advisory Committee's scepticism with regard to the Secretary-General's proposal to add a senior-level post in the hierarchy between the Under-Secretary-General and the directors of the Office of Conference Services and the Office of General Services. Also, like the Advisory Committee, he believed that the prestige of the head of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) should be enhanced by raising the post at least to the under-secretary-general level. The head of OHRM would be actively involved in deploying posts, which would require a higher degree of authority. Moreover, the field itself was universally recognized, even in the international business world, as being of major importance.

60. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) and Mr. IIYAMBO (Namibia) said that they supported the ACABQ recommendations.

61. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that, although his delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal regarding the post of Assistant Secretary-General for Habitat, it would for the sake of consensus accept the ACABQ recommendations.

62. Mr. OWADE (Kenya), welcoming the positive step of the United States delegation, said that Kenya on the whole supported the ACABQ recommendations.

63. Mr. RANASINGHE (Sri Lanka) said that while his delegation could not fully support the Secretary-General's proposals, it did endorse the ACABQ recommendations, especially those in paragraph 4 of its report.

64. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) said that his delegation supported the ACABQ recommendations, especially those in paragraphs 4 and 6 of the report.

65. Mr. NDOBOLI (Uganda), expressing support for the ACABQ recommendations, especially those in paragraph 4 of the report, said that he hoped the issue of the level of the Executive Director of Habitat would be addressed in the context of the budget.

66. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that, while his delegation could support the main recommendations of the Secretary-General even though it had not received the information on extrabudgetary high-level posts which it had requested, it would not stand in the way of a consensus in support of the ACABQ

(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

recommendations. However, since ACABQ recommended deferral of all matters, it was not clear how acceptance of its recommendations would affect the management and budget of the Organization.

67. Mr. RAE (India), supported by Mr. RANASINGHE (Sri Lanka), suggested that the extrabudgetary high-level posts could be discussed at the resumed session.

68. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that he shared Canada's incomprehension but would not block consensus in support of the ACABQ recommendations. It would, however, have been useful if the Advisory Committee had considered at the same time the interrelated report on special representatives, envoys and related positions (A/C.5/48/26), and he therefore proposed that the Committee should decide to consider the latter at its resumed session.

69. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegation fully supported the ACABQ recommendations. It took note particularly of the Advisory Committee's comments on the Secretary-General's proposal (A/48/7/Add.2, para. 8) to remove secretariat services from the Department of Political Affairs, a proposal which Cuba could not accept. She asked for an explanation of what action the Secretary-General would take on that point if the Committee indeed supported the ACABQ recommendations.

70. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that, since the Secretary-General was guided by specific recommendations of the General Assembly, if the Advisory Committee's recommendations were endorsed, the Secretary-General would be requested, as was clear from paragraph 8 of the report (A/48/7/Add.2), to explain further the reasons for his proposal.

71. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Fifth Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on high-level posts (A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1); endorse the observations and recommendations of ACABQ in its report thereon (A/48/7/Add.2); and decide to consider at its resumed forty-eighth session the report on special representatives, envoys and related positions (A/C.5/48/26).

72. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 122: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Second programme budget performance report (A/C.5/48/48)

73. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee accept, on a provisional basis, a reduction in expenditures for the biennium 1992-1993 of $56,054,200 gross ($28,357,900 net). The Advisory Committee would undertake a detailed examination of the second performance report at its spring session in 1994, at which time it would issue its report on the factors used in preparing the performance report, namely, inflation, currency exchange rates and standard costs, with particular reference to common staff costs. The General Assembly would thus have another opportunity the

(Mr. Mselle)

following year to examine the performance report in the light of the detailed comments of the Advisory Committee.

74. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that he was pleased to hear that the Advisory Committee would return to the report the following year, as certain questions still required discussion. He would like to know whether a more complete performance report giving detailed changes in each section of the budget would be provided at the conclusion of the biennium 1992-1993. Also, he found it confusing that paragraph 18 of the second performance report (A/C.5/48/48) showed a reduction in common staff costs in New York of $9.3 million, while schedule 5 of the same document showed an increase in the corresponding percentage rate budgeted.

75. While the Secretary-General had indicated that some 1,200 regular-budget staff had served with peace-keeping operations during the year, paragraph 19 of the second performance report indicated that the vacancy rate in New York was lower than the standard rates. He wondered whether that was the result of the recruitment of a large number of temporary staff members and would like detailed information on the appointment of such staff to replace persons assigned to peace-keeping operations, in order to ensure that Member States were receiving full credit for salary expenditures not actually incurred. His delegation would also like to see a list of retired United Nations staff who had occupied such temporary positions in order to ascertain whether any had continued to collect their pensions while receiving payments in excess of the $12,000 limit imposed by the General Assembly.

76. His delegation would like clarification on the question of supernumeraries, inasmuch as the explanation received by his delegation, namely, that their existence was due to the delay in the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System, differed from that given in paragraph 20 of the second performance report. It would also like an explanation of the reduction of nearly $800,000 for internal audit services, primarily in respect of posts, despite the grave concern expressed by his delegation on numerous occasions regarding the inadequate supervision of the Organization's expenses and repeated General Assembly resolutions calling for the strengthening of those services.

77. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that his delegation would accept the Advisory Committee's proposal for a provisional decision, pending further careful consideration of the second performance report at the resumed session. He assumed that at a later stage the Fifth Committee would be provided with the document containing the proposals for the final appropriations for the biennium.

78. On the issue of the supernumeraries mentioned in paragraph 20 of the second performance report, he pointed out that the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/211, had accepted the opinions and reports of the Board of Auditors on the financial report of the United Nations. In its report (A/47/5) the Board of Auditors had stated that payments to supernumerary staff should not have been made without the prior approval of the General Assembly. Therefore, any such payments that had been made were unauthorized. The Committee's decision should reflect that fact that should include a request to the Secretary-General to

(Mr. Spaans, Netherlands)

provide complete information on the use of supernumeraries during the bienniums 1990-1991 and 1992-1993 in a written report to the General Assembly not later than its forty-ninth session. He also proposed that the Board of Auditors should be asked to conduct a special audit of the use of supernumeraries.

79. Mr. ORR (Canada) said that his delegation shared the view of the Advisory Committee that there were serious questions to be raised concerning common staff costs, inflation, exchange rates and other issues dealt with in the second performance report. His delegation recalled resolution 47/219, which, in section XXVI, paragraph 3, requested the Secretary-General to take steps to make the presentation of the performance report more timely and more transparent. Unfortunately, that had not been the case and any decision taken by the Committee should express regret at that fact. It also endorsed many of the questions asked by the two previous speakers. Most of the information in the performance report was even more out of date than had been the case the previous year, particularly in respect of exchange rates and post adjustment. Furthermore, there was no indication of the source of the inflation rates, despite repeated requests for that information by his delegation. In addition to the inconsistencies in the second performance report pointed out by the representative of the United States, there were many others. His delegation was confused, for example, by the fact that the same common staff cost percentage rate for New York proposed the previous year was being requested again in the second performance report. It also wondered why those costs were so high and which were the elements that were increasing faster than anticipated.

80. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the question asked by the United States representative, said that there would be addenda to the second performance report. On the question of the rate of common staff costs, the 39.7 per cent figure for New York in schedule 5 of the report was the rate of the initial appropriation and had erroneously been left in the current report. A corrigendum which was currently being issued would show that the rate had decreased; it would also justify the figure of $9.3 million appearing in paragraph 18 of the current report.

81. Vacancy rates were indeed lower in New York, and the requests for information on appointments of staff to replace persons assigned to peace-keeping operations and on retired staff would be passed on to the Director of Personnel. He would also be able to obtain information on the question of the level of vacancies in the Internal Audit Division, which had been high during the biennium. On the question of transparency, he felt that more information was contained in the current report than in the past and that the information was more detailed and more comprehensive.

82. The CHAIRMAN invited the Fifth Committee to take action on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee concerning the second performance report for the biennium 1992-1993. He further invited the delegations to submit their specific proposals in that regard.

83. Mr. ORR (Canada) said that, the statement by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division notwithstanding, he saw no increase in transparency in the current report and reiterated his proposal that the Committee's decision should include a paragraph expressing regret that the second performance report did not respond adequately to the request in section XXVI, paragraph 3, of resolution 47/219.

84. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that the Board of Auditors should be requested to undertake a special audit of vacancies in regular-budget posts resulting from redeployment of staff to peace-keeping operations and the impact of such vacancies on the salary and common staff costs indicated in the 1992-1993 budget and to report its findings to the forty-ninth session.

85. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) proposed that the meeting should be suspended briefly to enable the interested delegations to draft their proposed additions to the Fifth Committee's recommendation.

The meeting was suspended at 11.05 p.m. and resumed at 11.25 p.m.

86. The CHAIRMAN said that, taking into account the additional texts submitted to him by the interested delegations, he took it that the Fifth Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should approve provisionally the revised estimates of expenditure and income for the biennium 1992-1993 as reflected in the second performance report (A/C.5/48/48); decide to consider in detail the second performance report at its resumed forty-eighth session; note that the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was not in accordance with section XXVI, paragraph 3, of resolution 47/219 with respect to its timeliness and transparency and request the Secretary-General to comply with the aforementioned resolution; reiterate its endorsement of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors in paragraphs 193 to 196 of its report (A/47/5) that payments to supernumerary staff should not have been effected without prior approval of the General Assembly; note that such approval had not been requested and that such payments were consequently not authorized by the General Assembly; request the Secretary-General to provide all information on all aspects of the use of supernumeraries during the bienniums 1990-1991 and 1992-1993 in a written report to the resumed forty-eighth session of the General Assembly; invite the Board of Auditors to include in its audit of the regular-budget accounts for the biennium 1992-1993 the question of the supernumeraries as well as its findings concerning vacancies in regular-budget posts resulting from the redeployment of staff to peace-keeping operations and the impact of such vacancies on salaries and common staff costs incurred during the biennium.

87. It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

88. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the consideration of agenda item 163 (Programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991) should be deferred to the resumed forty-eighth session.

89. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.40 p.m.